

Extract from 'Twas the Night Before Christmas (1823)

by CLEMENT CLARKE MOORE (1799—1863)

...When, what to my wondering eyes should appear,
But a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer.

With a little old driver, so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment it must be St Nick.
More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them by name!

"Now Dasher! now, Dancer! now, Prancer and Vixen!
On, Comet! On, Cupid! on, on Donner and Blitzen!
To the top of the porch! to the top of the wall!
Now dash away! Dash away! Dash away all!"

As dry leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to the sky.
So up to the house-top the coursers they flew,
With the sleigh full of Toys, and St Nicholas too.

And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.
As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St Nicholas came with a bound.

He was dressed all in fur, from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot.
A bundle of Toys he had flung on his back,
And he looked like a peddler, just opening his pack...



Read this poem and see if you can answer these questions about it.

1, What is another word (synonym) for 'miniature'?

2, Who is St. Nick?

3, What 3 words are used by the poet to describe how St. Nick got his reindeer together?

4, What made the noises on the roof?

5, How did St Nick come into the house?

6, The poet said the reindeer were faster than which animals?

7, Using the dates of Clement Clarke, can you work out...

a) How old he was when he wrote this poem?

b) How old was he when he died?

8, What do you think the poet means by '*his coursers*' ?

Answers

1, What is another word (synonym) for 'miniature'?

Tiny/small

2, Who is St. Nick?

Father Christmas/ Santa Claus

3, What 3 words are used by the poet to describe how St. Nick got his reindeer together?

Whistled, shouted, called.

4, What made the noises on the roof?

The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

5, How did St Nick come into the house?

Down the chimney.

6, The poet said the reindeer were faster than which animals?

Eagles.

7, Using the dates of Clement Clarke, can you work out...

a) How old was he when he wrote this poem?

24 years old

.b) How old was he when he died?

64 years old

8, What do you think the poet means by '*his coursers*' ?

The reindeer.